



## Collaboration in mental health care

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness during his or her lifetime. According to the 2007 National Physician Survey (NPS), patient access to psychiatric specialists is the area of care that gets the worst rating from FPs, with 64% of FPs across Canada rating access as fair or poor on a 5-point scale. Fifty percent of FPs rated access to psychosocial support services (eg, psychologists, social workers) as fair or poor; 50% rated access to mental health counselors as fair or poor; and 46% rated access to addiction counselors as fair or poor. Provincial results can be found in **Figure 1**. The results suggest that mental health services in general are difficult to access from coast to coast.

Where do FPs fit in the provision of mental health care?

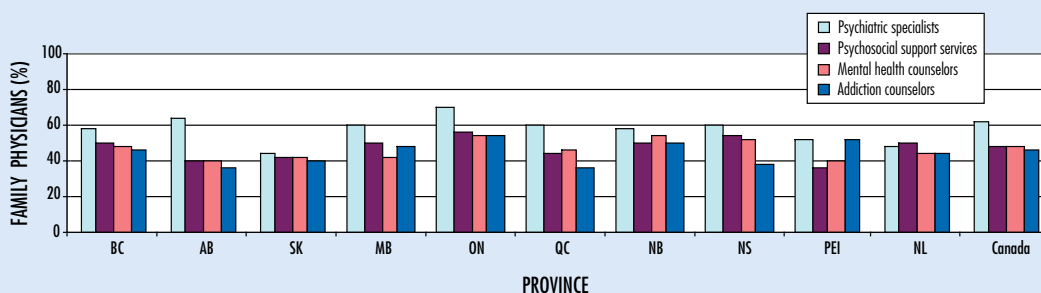
- Eighty-six percent of Canadian FPs care for patients with chronic mental illnesses (**Figure 2**).
- Among the 86% of FPs who care for patients with

chronic mental illness, 67% of them collaborate with psychiatric specialists in caring for their patients; 56% collaborate with social workers; 49% collaborate with psychologists; 43% collaborate with mental health counselors; and 31% collaborate with addiction counselors. Provincial results can be found in **Figure 3**.

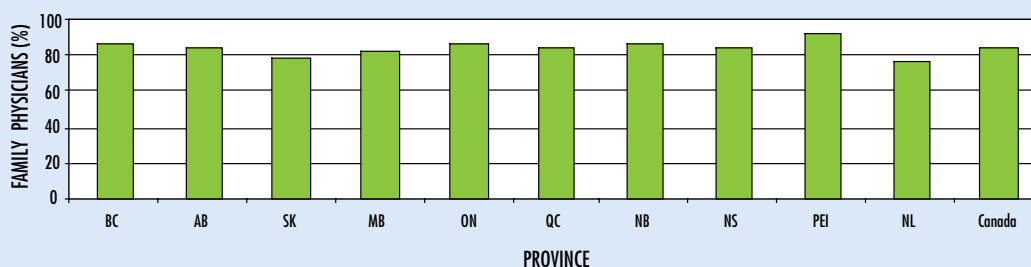
- Eighty-two percent of psychiatrists regularly collaborate with FPs.

The NPS is a collaborative project of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Additional results are available at [www.nationalphysicianssurvey.ca](http://www.nationalphysicianssurvey.ca). If you would like the opportunity to develop and write a future Fast Fact using the NPS results, please contact **Sarah Scott**, National Physician Survey and Janus Project Coordinator, at 800 387-6197, extension 289, or [sks@cfpc.ca](mailto:sks@cfpc.ca).

**Figure 1.** Percentage of FPs rating access to psychiatric specialists, psychosocial support services, mental health counselors, and addiction counselors as fair or poor, by province



**Figure 2.** Percentage of FPs caring for patients with chronic mental illnesses, by province



**Figure 3.** Percentage of FPs who care for patients with chronic mental illnesses regularly collaborating with other health care providers in caring for their patients, by province

